

## Message Text

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TAGS: AORG, ECON, ECOSOC  
SUBJECT: ECOSOC INFORMAL SESSION ON RESTRUCTURING:  
MARCH 27-31

1. SUMMARY. DURING ITS INFORMAL SESSION MARCH 27-31 ECOSOC HAD A FIRST EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SECTION II OF THE GA RESTRUCTURING RESOLUTION (32/197) RELATING TO THE ORIENTATION OF THE COUNCIL'S WORK AND THE STREAMLINING OF ITS SUBSIDIARY ORGANS. FOCUS OF DISCUSSION WAS CONFERENCE ROOM PAPER #1, PREPARED BY SECRETARIAT. THE WEEK'S DISCUSSIONS INDICATED THAT THE COUNCIL WAS NOT YET NEAR AGREEMENT ON THE SPECIFIC STEPS WHICH MIGHT BE TAKEN TO THIS END. THE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL UNDERTOOK TO PRODUCE A SECOND DRAFT PAPER WHICH WOULD ATTEMPT TO IDENTIFY TENTATIVE AREAS OF AGREEMENT AND SUGGEST POSSIBLE FURTHER STEPS EVEN WHERE NO CONSENSUS HAS BEGUN TO EMERGE, USING BRACKETED LANGUAGE AS NECESSARY. A TENTATIVE PROGRAM OF WORK FOR 1979-80, WITH HYPOTHESIS OF SECRETARIAT PROPOSALS FOR REORGANIZATION, WOULD ALSO BE PREPARED BY THE SECRETARIAT IN ORDER TO SHOW HOW THE COUNCIL MIGHT PROVIDE FOR VARIOUS SUBJECT-ORIENTED MEETINGS DURING A BIENNIAL CYCLE. END SUMMARY  
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2. ECOSOC'S INFORMAL SESSION ON RESTRUCTURING OPENED MARCH 27 WITH A GENERAL DISCUSSION ON THE NEED FOR RESTRUCTURING OF ECOSOC AND ITS SUBSIDIARY MACHINERY, PRINCIPLES WHICH SHOULD GUIDE THE RESTRUCTURING EFFORT, AND THE ULTIMATE GOALS TO BE ACHIEVED THROUGH RESTRUCTURING. SINCE A FAIR DEGREE OF AGREEMENT AMONG DELEGATIONS AP-

PEARED TO EXIST AT THIS LEVEL OF DISCUSSION, ECOSOC PRESIDENT MILLS (JAMAICA) PROPOSED THAT THE SECRETARIAT PRODUCE FOR CONSIDERATION AN INFORMAL CONFERENCE ROOM PAPER OUTLINING IN SOME DETAIL STEPS WHICH MIGHT BE TAKEN TO IMPLEMENT THE GA RESTRUCTURING RESOLUTION AS REGARDS ECOSOC AND ITS SUBSIDIARY BODIES. THE PAPER SPARKED GREATER DIFFERENCES, HOWEVER, OVER THE SPECIFICS OF ACTUALLY IMPLEMENTING RESTRUCTURING.

3. BRIEFLY, THE MAJOR POINTS OF TENTATIVE AGREEMENT AT THIS PRELIMINARY STAGE ARE AS FOLLOWS:

(A) ECOSOC MUST STRIKE A BALANCE BETWEEN RETAINING FLEXIBILITY IN DEFINING ITS BIENNIAL WORK PROGRAMS IN ORDER TO GIVE PRIORITY TO MAJOR ISSUES OF CURRENT INTEREST AND EMERGING PROBLEMS REQUIRING ATTENTION, AND ASSURING SUITABLE ARRANGEMENTS TO GIVE SUFFICIENTLY INTENSIVE AND FREQUENT CONSIDERATION IN SUBJECT-ORIENTED SESSIONS TO SUBJECTS NOW TREATED IN ITS SUBSIDIARY BODIES IF IT IS TO ASSUME DIRECT RESPONSIBILITY FOR DEALING WITH THEM.

(B) A "RESTRUCTURED" ECOSOC SHOULD INTEGRATE THE EXPERT/TECHNICAL AND GENERAL POLICY ASPECTS OF CONSIDERATION OF TOPICS INTO A SINGLE STAGE IN PLACE OF THE PRESENT TWO-STAGE PROCESS WHEREBY EXPERTS IN SUBSIDIARY BODIES DEAL FIRST WITH QUESTIONS WHICH THEN ARE PASSED TO THE UNCLASSIFIED

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COUNCIL FOR CONSIDERATION AT A "POLITICAL" LEVEL. NATIONAL DELEGATIONS TO SUBJECT-ORIENTED SESSIONS SHOULD, THEREFORE, INCLUDE THE NECESSARY EXPERTISE TO ASSURE IN-DEPTH AND DETAILED TREATMENT OF THE SUBJECT.

(C) ANY DECISION TO ELIMINATE SUBSIDIARY BODIES OF THE COUNCIL MUST ALSO PROVIDE FOR BROADER PARTICIPATION BY UN MEMBER STATES IN THE WORK OF ECOSOC. THERE WAS ONLY VERY PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION ON THE MOST SUITABLE MEANS OF ACHIEVING THIS OBJECTIVE (SEE PARA 5 BELOW).

(D) IN GENERAL, EXPERT BODIES SHOULD COMPLETE THE TASKS CONTAINED IN THEIR CURRENT MANDATES, AND THEREAFTER MEET ON AN AD HOC BASIS, SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY ECOSOC. (THE CDP WOULD CONTINUE AS AT PRESENT, ALTHOUGH MEETING OF ITS WORKING GROUPS WOULD BE CONVENED ON AD AD HOC BASIS).

(E) THE COMMITTEE ON NEGOTIATIONS WITH INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WOULD BE ABOLISHED AS A STANDING COMMITTEE AND MEET IN THE FUTURE AS AN AD HOC SESSIONAL COMMITTEE OF ECOSOC AS NEEDED.

(F) ECOSOC WOULD REVIEW IN 1979 THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS BASED ON RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE COMMISSION AS TO HOW ITS WORK SHOULD BE PERFORMED IN THE FUTURE.

(G) THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS SHOULD REVIEW THE WORK AND ORGANIZATION OF ITS SUBSIDIARY MACHINERY AND REPORT TO ECOSOC THEREON.

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(H) THERE MUST BE FURTHER CLARIFICATION OF HOW ECOSOC WOULD HANDLE SUBJECTS NOW TREATED IN SUBSIDIARY BODIES. THERE WAS SOME FEELING THAT THE MANDATES OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODIES (WHICH IN SOME CASES, HAD BEEN PAINSTAKINGLY NEGOTIATED TO BALANCE THE CONCERNS OF VARIOUS GEOGRAPHIC GROUPS) SHOULD IN APPROPRIATE CASES GUIDE ECOSOC IN ITS SUBJECT-ORIENTED DELIBERATIONS.

4. TWO MAJOR AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT EMERGED: WHICH STANDING COMMITTEES AND FUNCTIONAL COMMISSIONS SHOULD HAVE THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES AND WORK PROGRAMS DIRECTLY ASSUMED BY ECOSOC; AND WHO WOULD ATTEND (AND IN WHAT CAPACITY) THE RESULTANT SUBJECT-ORIENTED SESSIONS OF ECOSOC. FROM THE COMMENTS OF VARIOUS DELEGATIONS, ASSUMPTION BY ECOSOC OF DIRECT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SUBJECT MATTER OF THE FOLLOWING SUBSIDIARY BODIES WOULD APPEAR TO POSE PROBLEMS FOR ONE OR A NUMBER OF GOVERNMENTS: COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT, ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE APPLICATION OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT (ACAST), COMMISSION ON TRANS-

NATIONAL CORPORATIONS, COMMISSION ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT,  
AND COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN. THERE WERE ALSO  
SOME RESERVATIONS ON THE PROPOSAL THAT A SESSIONAL COMMIT-  
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TEE OF ECOSOC BE ESTABLISHED EACH YEAR TO DEAL WITH NON-  
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOS), REFLECTING LARGELY A  
GENERAL DESIRE TO KEEP THE COMMITTEE RELATIVELY SMALL.

5. THE PROBLEM OF DEFINING PARTICIPATION BY MEMBER STATES  
AND "EXPERTS" IN THE SUBJECT-ORIENTED SESSIONS OF ECOSOC  
GENERATED MUCH DISCUSSION BUT LITTLE WAS RESOLVED. THE G-  
77 MADE CLEAR THAT EXPANDED PARTICIPATION BY MEMBER STATES  
IN ECOSOC'S WORK (TO COMPENSATE FOR LOSS OF PARTICIPATION  
IN SUBSIDIARY BODIES) WAS A SINE QUA NON FOR THEIR ACCEP-  
TANCE OF STREAMLINING THE COUNCIL'S SUBSTRUCTURE, BUT,  
GIVEN THE SENSITIVITY OF THE QUESTION OF EXPANDING ECOSOC,  
DELEGATIONS AVOIDED ADVANCING CONCRETE PROPOSALS AT THIS  
TIME. THE SOVIET REP FIRMLY REJECTED EXPANDING ECOSOC'S  
FORMAL MEMBERSHIP AS A SOLUTION AND ALSO MADE CLEAR THAT HE  
WOULD OPPOSE PROPOSALS LOOKING TO EXPANDING THE SIZE OF THE  
COUNCIL'S SESSIONAL COMMITTEES (WHICH COULD RESULT IN CALLS  
AT A LATER DATE FOR INCREASING THE SIZE OF THE COUNCIL).  
SEVERAL INFORMAL SUGGESTIONS WERE MADE REGARDING OPEN-ENDED  
PARTICIPATION IN SESSIONAL COMMITTEES WHICH WOULD BE  
ESTABLISHED DURING SUBJECT-ORIENTED SESSIONS. ON THE RE-  
LATED QUESTION OF "EXPERT" PARTICIPATION IN ECOSOC'S WORK,  
SUGGESTIONS WERE MADE THAT THE COUNCIL RECOMMEND ACTION TO  
FACILITATE SUCH PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL DELEGATIONS,  
PARTICULARLY FROM DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, IN LIGHT OF THE  
FACT THAT THE UN NOW PAYS THE EXPENSES OF EXPERTS AND  
REPRESENTATIVES TO A NUMBER OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODIES. IT  
WAS ALSO NOTED THAT IN SOME CASES INDIVIDUAL EXPERTS OR  
AD HOC EXPERT GROUPS MIGHT BE USEFULLY CALLED UPON BY THE  
SECRETARIAT TO PREPARE DOCUMENTATION FOR SUBJECT-ORIENTED  
SESSIONS, ALTHOUGH MANY G-77 DELEGATIONS CAUTIONED  
AGAINST EXCESSIVE EMPHASIS ON SUCH EXPERT GROUPS. THE  
DEBATE LEFT UNANSWERED OTHER QUESTIONS ABOUT THE MAGNITUDE  
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OF ANY SUCH PROGRAM, HOWEVER, AND WHETHER THE UN BUDGET  
WOULD BE CALLED UPON ONLY TO PAY THE EXPENSES OF EXPERTS  
FUNCTIONING IN THEIR INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY IN SUPPORT OF  
THE SECRETARIAT OR ALSO TO COVER THE  
EXPENSES OF "EXPERTS" SERVING ON THEIR COUNTRIES'  
DELEGATIONS. THE SECRETARIAT SUGGESTED THAT SOME \$320,000

IN THE 1978-79 PROGRAM/BUDGET AVAILABLE TO FINANCE ATTENDANCE OF COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVES TO MEETINGS OF FUNCTIONAL COMMISSIONS AND STANDING COMMITTEES COULD BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.

6. THE U.S. SUGGESTED THAT, SHOULD THE COUNCIL DECIDE TO ASSUME DIRECT RESPONSIBILITY FOR VARIOUS SUBJECT AREAS NOW WITHIN THE MANDATES OF STANDING COMMITTEES OR FUNCTIONAL COMMISSIONS, A "SAFETY NET" ARRANGEMENT ALSO BE AGREED UPON UNDER WHICH THE SUBSIDIARY BODIES IN QUESTION WOULD LEGALLY CONTINUE IN EXISTENCE BUT WOULD BE INOPERATIVE DURING A TRIAL BIENNIUM WHEN THE COUNCIL WOULD EXPERIMENT WITH A NUMBER OF SUBJECT-ORIENTED SESSIONS. SHOULD EXPERIENCE DURING THIS PERIOD INDICATE THAT CERTAIN SUBJECT AREAS COULD BEST BE TREATED INITIALLY IN A SUBSIDIARY ORGAN, THE COUNCIL COULD RETURN RESPONSIBILITY TO THE ORGAN IN QUESTION WHICH COULD THEN RESUME ITS WORK. IF THE EXPERIMENT DEMONSTRATED THAT THE COUNCIL COULD EFFECTIVELY DEAL IMMEDIATELY WITH THE SUBJECT MATTER, THE SUBSIDIARY ORGAN COULD THEN BE FORMALLY ABOLISHED.

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7. AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE SESTLION, ECOSOC PRESIDENT MILLS AGREED TO CONSULT FURTHER INFORMALLY WITH A VIEW TO PRODUCING A SECOND DRAFT OF THE CONFERENCE ROOM PAPER, USING BRACKETED LANGUAGE AS NECESSARY IN ORDER TO BETTER IDENTIFY TENTATIVE AREAS OF AGREEMENT AND TO PRESENT SUGGESTIONS EVEN WHERE DIFFERENCES OF VIEW EXIST. THIS PAPER TOGETHER WITH A MODEL OR TENTATIVE BIENNIAL WORK CALENDAR FOR 1979-80 TO BE PREPARED BY THE SECRETARIAT

SHOWING HOW THE COUNCIL MIGHT PROVIDE FOR VARIOUS SUBJECT-ORIENTED MEETINGS WOULD BE DISTRIBUTED TO DELEGATIONS PRIOR TO THE FIRST REGULAR SESSION OF THE COUNCIL.

8. COMMENT: THE WEEK'S INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS INDICATE THAT THE COUNCIL IS NOT YET NEAR AGREEMENT ON CONCRETE MEASURES TO IMPLEMENT RESTRUCTURING OF ITS OPERATIONS AND SUBSIDIARY BODIES AND THAT A GOOD DEAL MORE CONSULTATION AND ANALYSIS OF HOW POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS MIGHT WORK IS NECESSARY. IT IS EVIDENT THAT ANY GENERALLY ACCEPTABLE RESTRUCTURING PACKAGE MUST ADDRESS ITSELF IN A COHERENT, INTEGRATED FASHION TO THE THREE INTER-RELATED CONCERNS OF: (1) HOW WILL ECOSOC'S WORK PROGRAM BE DESIGNED AND WHAT WILL IT INCLUDE; (2) WHICH SUBSIDIARY BODIES WILL HAVE THEIR SUBJECT MATTER TAKEN OVER DIRECTLY

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BY THE COUNCIL; WHICH REQUIRE UPDATING OF THEIR MANDATE; AND WHICH REQUIRE STREAMLINING OF THEIR OWN SUBSIDIARY ORGANS; AND (3) HOW CAN PARTICIPATION BY MEMBER STATES BE BROADENED AND THE NECESSARY TECHNICAL EXPERTISE BE BROUGHT TO BEAR IN SUBJECT-ORIENTED MEETINGS. THERE WAS WIDESPREAD RECOGNITION THAT GOVERNMENT AGENCIES WERE CONCERNED WHETHER SUBJECT-ORIENTED MEETINGS AND ACCOMPANYING ARRANGEMENTS WOULD BE A SATISFACTORY AND EFFECTIVE ALTERNATIVE TO THE PRESENT SYSTEM OF DEALING WITH THE ISSUES INVOLVED INITIALLY IN SUBSIDIARY BODIES AT THE "EXPERT" LEVEL AND THAT THESE CONCERNS NEEDED TO BE MET. LEONARD

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## Message Attributes

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